

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-14 SIG-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
HA-05 TRSE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 /088 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/DWG:G DESANTILLANA
APPROVED BY ARA:S A SHELTON
USOAS:M DION (SUBS)

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O 200030Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
INFO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, PINT, DR, OAS

SUBJECT: OAS OBSERVERS' REPORT ON DOMINICAN ELECTIONS

REF: STATE 127460

PANAMA FOR ROBERT PASTOR, NSC

1. FOLLOWING IS UNOFFICIALTRANSLATION OF REPORT TO THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE PERMAMENT COUNCIL OF THE OAS BY THE THREE
OAS OBSERVERS OF THE DOMINICAN ELECTIONS: EX-PRESIDENTS
GALO PLAZA OF ECUADOR, PASTRANA OF COLOMBIA, AND MENDEZ
MONTENEGRO OF GUATEMALA. THE THREE OBSERVERS LEFT SANTO
DOMINGO THIS MORNING MAY 19. THEIR REPORT (IN SPANISH)
WAS RELEASED BY THE OAS THIS AFTERNOON AT 3:00PM.

2. QUOTE DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: IT WAS A PRIVILEGE FOR US
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TO BE PRESENT IN THE FINAL STAGE OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND AT THE BALLOTING ITSELF FOR
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION AND COM-
POSITION OF THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES FOR THE YEARS 1978-82.
THROUGH THE CONTACTS ESTABLISHED, THE VARIETY OF INFORMA-
TION RECEIVED, AND THE NEWS APPEARING IN A PLURALISTIC AND
FREE PRESS, WE WERE ABLE TO ESTABLISH THAT THE DEMOCRATIC

COMPETITION WENT FORWARD INTENSELY THROUGHOUT THE THREE MONTHS DURING WHICH THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY WAS AUTHORIZED BY LAW AND THAT THE CANDIDATES OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES WERE ABLE TO VISIT THE PROVINCES OF THE COUNTRY WITHOUT UNDUE OFFICIAL INTERFERENCE. NOTWITHSTANDING THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE FOLLOWERS OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL FACTIONS, UNFORTUNATE INCIDENTS WERE VERY FEW.

3. WE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF SPEAKING AT LENGTH WITH MANUEL JOAQUIN CASTILLO, CHAIRMAN, OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD, AND WITH HIS ADVISERS. AFTER EXCHANGING VIEWS ON THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL LAW PRESENTLY IN FORCE AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION MACHINERY IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT INDEED TO COMMIT FRAUD IN ORDER TO MODIFY THE AUTHENTIC RESULTS OF THE VOTING. INDEED IT WOULD SEEM THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBSERVING THE ELECTIONS ARE INsofar AS POSSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE MAIN PARTIES. IN ANY CASE, EACH POLITICAL PARTY PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTION HAS THE RIGHT TO NAME ONE DELEGATE TO EACH OF THE OBSERVER PANELS IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN INSURING THE HONESTY OF THE ELECTION. WE WERE ABLE TO ATTEST TO THEIR PRESENCE DURING THE ELECTIONS LAST TUESDAY.

4. THE FACT THAT 13 DIFFERENT POLITICAL GROUPINGS WERE REGISTERED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION IS A REFLECTION
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OF THE VARIED MANIFESTATIONS OF DOMINICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND A DEMONSTRATION OF THE BOARD TOLERANCE SHOWN AS THE ELECTIONS PROGRESSED. THUS, THE VOTER WAS IN A POSITION TO SELECT THE CANDIDATE REFLECTING HIS OWN SPIRITUAL AFFINITIES OR HIS THOUGHTS REGARDING PLATFORM OR PROGRAMS.

5. WE SPOKE TO THE CANDIDATES FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC WHO GAVE US THEIR CANDID IMPRESSIONS ON THE WAY THE ELECTORAL CONTEST WAS BEING CARRIED OUT AND WE HELD A CORDIAL DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT JOAQUIN BALAGUER IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE ITSELF. ON ELECTION DAY WE VISITED NUMEROUS VOTING PLACES IN THE CAPITAL CITY AND THEN WE TRAVELED TO OTHER CITIES IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE SAME PURPOSE. FOR THIS REASON WE ARE ABLE TO BEAR DIRECT WITNESS TO A PEOPLE DECIDING ITS OWN DESTINY IN CIVILIZED HARMONY AND ORDER. THE POLICE, PLACED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD, ACTED WITH DISCRETION TO GUARANTEE THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION. THE HIGH VOTER PARTICIPATION IS THE MOST ELOQUENT PROOF OF THE WILL OF THE CITIZENS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF THEIR NATION. AS OBSERVERS DESIGNATED

IN OUR PERSONAL CAPACITIES BY THE COUNCIL OF THE OAS ON THE REQUEST OF THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF, FOR US IT WAS A VERY HIGH HONOR AND A SOURCE OF SPECIAL PLEASURE

TO HAVE WITNESSED THIS EXEMPLARY CIVIC EVENT WHICH ENABLES THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE AND WHICH IS ONE MORE STEP IN THE STRUGGLE OF LATIN AMERICA FOR THE CONQUEST AND CONSOLIDATION 88 DEMOCRATIC VALUES.

6. HAVING COMPLETED THIS REPORT WHICH COVERED THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF OUR MISSION, ON WEDNESDAY MORNING WE LEARNED OF THE SUDDEN SUSPENSION OF THE COUNTING OF BALLOTS EARLY IN THE MORNING BY THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD. WE TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO REACH THE CENTRAL
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ELECTORAL BOARD BY TELEPHONE IN ORDER TO FIND OUT WHY. LIKEWISE WE URGENTLY REQUESTED AN AUDIENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, DR. JOAQUIN BALAGUER WHO RECEIVED US IN HIS OFFICE AT ONE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.

7. WE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN TO THE CHIEF OF STATE OWING TO THE ABOVE-MENTIONED SUSPENSION OF THE BALLOT-COUNTING PROCESS AND TO THE RUMORS CIRCULATING IN THE CITY AND EVEN ABROAD IN REGARD TO THE ACTIONS OF THE AUTHORITIES. THE PRESIDENT CATEGORICALLY STATED TO US THAT HE WOULD BE THE FIRST TO REJECT ANY COUP D'ETAT AND TO OPPOSE ANY BREAKDOWN IN THE ORDER OF LAW. WE REMINDED HIM THAT OUR PRESENCE AS OBSERVERS ON THE INVITATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES MADE US TOO INTO UNDERWRITERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE IN DEFENSE OF THE RESPECT OF THE EXPRESSED TRUTH OF THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE. THE PRESIDENT TOLD US THAT IT WAS ONLY IN THE MORNING THAT HE HAD LEARNED OF THE INTERRUPTION IN COUNTING OF THE ELECTORAL RESULTS AND THAT THIS HAD BEEN DUE TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD, MR. CASTILLO WHOSE WHEREABOUTS WERE UNKNOWN. HE ADDED THAT HE INTENDED TO TRY TO LOCATE HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR TO CONVOKE EITHER THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OR THEIR ALTERNATES. HE REPEATED THAT THIS WOULD BE NECESSARY IN ORDER FOR THE COUNTING TO PROCEED TO COMPLETION. TO OUR RESPECTFUL SUGGESTION THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO TELL THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE WHAT HE HAD TOLD US, HE REPLIED THAT THE COMMUNICATION MEDIA WERE ALSO UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD.

8. AS WE WERE PREPARING TO RETURN TO OUR COUNTRIES UPON
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COMPLETION OF THE MISSION ENTRUSTED TO US, WE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BALAGUER TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD STATING THAT THIS HIGH BODY HAD REASSUMED ITS PROPER FUNCTION, AS IT HAD BEEN INDICATED WOULD HAPPEN IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED INTERVIEW, AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY IN THE

WORDS OF THE PRESIDENT, "THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WHICH A FEW HOURS AGO WAS INTERRUPTED FOR REASONS BEYOND THE CONTROL BOTH OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, HAS NOW RETURNED TO NORMAL." IN VIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT WE SPOKE AGAIN TODAY (THURSDAY) WITH MR. CASTILLO WHO RECEIVED US WITH THE OTHER TWO MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL BOARD. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE COUNTING OF THE VOTES IN THE MUNICIPALITIES HAD FORMALLY BEGUN. WHEN WE ASKED IF THE CITIZENS WOULD CONTINUE RECEIVING PERIODIC RESULTS HE SURPRISED US BY STATING THAT ONLY THE FINAL NATIONAL RESULTS WOULD BE ISSUED AND THAT, IN ADDITION, THE ELECTORAL LAW PROVIDED FOR UP TO 30 DAYS FOR THIS PURPOSE COUNTING FROM ELECTION DAY.

9. WE ALSO ASKED IF THE COUNTING HAD BEGUN AGAIN IN THE CAPITAL CITY AND UPON RECEIVING A POSITIVE REPLY WE DEEMED IT APPROPRIATE TO GO TO THE CONGRESSIONAL PALACE WHERE THE LOCAL ELECTORAL BOARD IS PRESENTLY FUNCTIONING AND WHICH WAS MEETING IN THE PRESENCE OF WITNESSES FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES. ITS MEMBERS INFORMED US THAT LOW-RANKING MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY FORCES HAD FORCED THEM TO LEAVE THE PREMISES A FEW HOURS BEFORE BUT THAT SOON OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY HAD OFFERED THEM GUARANTEES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION OF ORDERS FROM ABOVE. WE CANNOT CONCLUDE THIS REPORT WITHOUT MENTIONING OUR DEEP CONCERN FOR THE VEIL OF SILENCE PRESENTLY COVERING THE ELECTORAL RESULTS. IT HAS PROPERLY BEEN SAID THAT ACCESS TO INFORMATION IS A
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SACRED CIVIC RIGHT AND EVEN MORE SO WHEN SUCH INFORMATION CONCERNS THE MOST TRANSCENDENTAL ACT IN ANY DEMOCRACY, THAT WHICH DEFINES THE DESTINY OF A NATION.

10. IN THIS SITUATION OF OBVIOUS CONFUSION IN THE LIFE OF THE NOBLE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, WE REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT THE LOYALTY WHICH PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAS SHOWN FOR

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES DURING THE LONG YEARS OF HIS
PRESIDENCY WILL ALLOW HIM TO DISSIPATE THE DOUBTS WHOSE
SHADOWS NOW DARKEN THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIS COUNTRY. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROGRESS REPORTS, ELECTION OBSERVATION TEAM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE126741
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: G DESANTILLANA
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780212-0288
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780538/aaaabflv.tel
Line Count: 227
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 566c179a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 127460
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2628723
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OAS OBSERVERS' REPORT ON DOMINICAN ELECTIONS
TAGS: PORG, PINT, DR, OAS
To: SANTO DOMINGO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/566c179a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014